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NEW SPECIES OF THE MONTH: THE BRAZILIAN MONKEYS

Brazil boasts the world's largest tropical rainforest, and with it the world's greatest diversity of primate species. No less than 68 species have been identified there. Many of those are rare, and some are very new to science. Three have been identified in the last decade alone.

The recent finds started with a **new squirrel monkey**, a two-pound creature presented in 1985 with the scientific label *Saimiri vanzolinii*. This primate inhabits a tiny territory, perhaps the smallest of any South American monkey, at the joining of the Amazon and Japura rivers in central Brazil.

The next discovery involved an even smaller creature, now known as the black-faced lion tamarin. This monkey, not much larger than a rat, was found on a coastal island named Superagui by two Brazilian scientists engaged in cataloging the local bird life. A fisherman described the black and gold monkey to the visitors, professors Maria Lucia Lorini and Vanessa Guerra Persson, and provided a skin. Lorini and Persson then found the live animals and published their discovery in June 1990. The official discoverers acknowledged their debt to the local fishermen, or caissara, by proposing *Leontopithecus caissara* as the species' formal name.

The location was a surprise: Superagui is largely developed, and lies in the heavily populated region surrounding Sao Paulo. Primatologist Russell Mittermeier, president of Conservation International, remarked that it was "almost like finding a major new species in the Los Angeles suburbs."

NEW MONKEYS (CONT.):

The most recent find came from the depths of the rain forest. In the fall of 1992, the first report of the **Rio Maues marmoset** was published. The new marmoset is a long-tailed greyish furball weighing less than a pound. It sports faint black stripes, large eyes, distinct ear tufts, and a cuddly face reminiscent of a koala.

Swiss scientist Marco Schwarz actually found the monkey in 1985 near the Maues river, a tributary of the Amazon. He obtained a live pair of the marmosets, but didn't immediately recognize their uniqueness. It wasn't until photographs of the eight-inch-long animals reached Dr. Mittermeier that the species *Callithix mausei* was officially added to the primate order.

Dr. Mittermeier thinks Brazil may yield more primates, as many four or five. That sounds startlingly optimistic, but Mittermeier knows something about finding primates, having personally rediscovered the supposedly extinct Peruvian yellow-tailed woolly monkey in 1974.

SOURCES: Anonymous. 1993. "Welcome to the Order," *Discover,* March // Anonymous. 1991. "Stunning New Primate Species Found in Brazil," *National Geographic,* October // Burton, John A., and Bruce Pearson. 1987. *The Collins Guide to the Rare Mammals of the World.* Lexington, MA: The Stephen Greene Press // Huyghe, Patrick. 1993. "Remote Amazon gives old world new monkey," Associated Press, October 12 // Reilly, Patti. 1992. "500 Years Later, Scientists Continue to 'Discover' America," news release, Conservation International. Washington, D.C.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO... THE IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER

There is no more tragic conservation story than that of the ivory-billed woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*). This bird is the largest U.S. woodpecker, over two feet long and handsomely decked out in formal black and white plumage. One ornithologist, Dr. Lester Short, commented that, "If the woodpecker world had royalty, the ivory-bill would be king."

The ivory-bill developed very specialized feeding habits, relying on a diet of beetles living in dying or recently dead trees in Southern forests. When those forests were cleared, the bird apparently could not adapt. The ivory-bill was **officially last recorded** in the U.S. in 1950, when a pair was spotted in Florida.

IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER (CONT.):

Ornithologists have searched the Southeast ever since, pursuing scattered reports of calls and sightings but never proving the bird's survival. The last piece of hard evidence, a single feather, was collected after a Florida sighting in 1969. The latest evidence of any kind came from Dr. Jerome Jackson, who played recordings of ivory-bill calls throughout the bird's range. In 1987 and 1988, he received replies, but failed to spot the actual bird.

The ivory-bill also lived in Cuba, where it was sometimes considered a different subspecies (*C. p. bairdii*), based on a minor difference in markings. By the 1970s, the Cuban ivory-bills were also widely considered extinct.

The last chapter in this story began on March 16, 1986, when a Cuban team spotted the first conclusively identified ivory-billed woodpecker in at least fifteen years. Dr. Short and other American ornithologists confirmed the find. An expedition invited by the Cuban government saw two or perhaps three individuals in 1987.

The surviving Cuban population was clearly a small and highly endangered one. The forest it inhabited was rapidly being logged out of existence. The logging was halted as a conservation measure, but that action now appears to have been inadequate or just too late to save the woodpecker. In 1993, a three-month search found not a single bird. The International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) has returned the woodpecker to the "extinct" list. The species may indeed be gone for good, unless a handful still hide somewhere in the remnants of America's southern forests. The chance is small, but a few die-hard woodpecker lovers haven't given up hope.

SOURCES: Anonymous. 1993. "Ivory-billed woodpecker extinct," *Oryx*, October // Cadieux, Charles L. 1991. *Wildlife Extinction.* Washington, D.C.: Stonewall Press // Lowe, David, et al. 1990. *The Official World Wildlife Fund Guide to Endangered Species of North America.* Washington, D.C.: Beacham Publishing // Short, Lester, and Jennifer Horne. 1986. "The Ivorybill Still Lives," *Natural History*, July.

UNCLASSIFIED: THE BRITISH NATURALISTS' MONSTER

Are there still large unclassified animals roaming the oceans of the world? The best evidence that there is comes from Michael J. Nicoll and E. G. B. Meade-Waldo. In 1905, these two scientists saw a "sea monster" which has never been explained.

BRITISH NATURALISTS' MONSTER (CONT.):

The witnesses were both experienced naturalists, Fellows of the Zoological Society of London. Their account of "a creature of most extraordinary form" is recorded in the Society's *Proceedings* and Nicoll's 1908 book *Three Voyages of A Naturalist.*

On December 7, 1905, at 10:15 AM, Nicoll and Meade-Waldo were on a research cruise aboard the yacht *Valhalla.* They were fifteen miles east of the mouth of Brazil's Parahiba River when Nicoll turned to his companion and asked, "Is that the fin of a great fish?"

The fin was cruising past them about a hundred yards away. Meade-Waldo described it as "dark seaweed-brown, somewhat crinkled at the edge." The visible part was roughly rectangular, about six feet long and eighteen inches to two feet high.

As Meade-Waldo watched through binoculars, a head on a long neck rose in front of the frill. He described the neck as "about the thickness of a slight man's body, and from 7 to 8 feet was out of the water; head and neck were all about the same thickness... The head had a very turtle-like appearance, as also the eye. It moved its head and neck from side to side in a peculiar manner: the color of the head and neck was dark brown above, and whitish below - almost white, I think."

Nicoll noted that, "Below the water we could indistinctly see a very large brownish-black patch, but could not make out the shape of the creature." They kept the creature in sight for several minutes. Then the *Valhalla* drew away from the beast, and the yacht was traveling under sail and could not come about. At 2:00 AM on December 8th, however, three crewmembers saw what appeared to be the same animal, almost entirely submerged, passing the *Valhalla* at a speed of about nine knots.

In a letter to author Rupert T. Gould, Meade-Waldo remarked, "I shall never forget poor Nicoll's face of amazement when we looked at each other after we had passed out of sight of it..."

There stands the most important sighting in the long and controversial history of the so-called "sea serpent." There seems no reason to doubt that these two well-qualified witnesses, under perfect conditions, described an animal unknown to science.

What, then, did they see? Meade-Waldo offered no theory. Nicoll, while admitting it is "impossible to be certain," suggested it was a mammal, adding that, "the general appearance of the creature, especially the soft, almost rubber-like fin, gave one this impression." The witnesses did not notice any diagnostic features such as hair, mammae, pectoral fins, gills, or nostrils.

Zoologist Bernard Heuvelmans, in his exhaustive tome *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents*, notes that Nicoll's sketch shows the creature's mouth ending directly below the eye. In reptiles, the mouth continues back beyond the eye. In mammals, it does not. There is no one rule for fish, and Heuvelmans suggests a huge eel or eel-shaped fish swimming with its head and forebody out of the water. (Conger eels do swim this way at times.)

Another candidate for the sighting might be a reptile. Nicoll's sketch certainly bears some resemblance to a plesiosaur. In addition to Heuvelmans' note about the mouth, however, no plesiosaur is known to have possessed a dorsal fin. Some species might have had a fin for use in threat or sexual displays, as some modern lizards do, but this is pure speculation.

Nicoll's idea of a mammal poses problems as well. No known mammal, living or extinct, fits the description. Some cryptozoologists believe sea monster reports concern prehistoric snakelike whales called zegulodons. It's conceivable this group could have evolved a long-necked form, but the whales were in fact evolving in the opposite direction, resulting in almost neckless modern cetaceans. One other mammalian possibility is a huge elongated seal, although no known seal has a dorsal fin.

Meade-Waldo was aware of the famous 1848 sighting by the crew of the frigate HMS *Daedalus*. He commented that his own creature "might easily be the same." The *Daedalus* witnesses reported an animal resembling "a large snake or eel" with a visible length of 60 feet. Captain Peter McQuahe thought it had mane on its back, while Lieutenant Drummond thought the feature was a dorsal fin.

There are a few reports specifically describing giant eels. A German vessel, the *Kaiserin Augusta Victoria*, observed such a creature in its entirety off England in 1912. The *Kaiserin*'s Captain Ruser described it as twenty feet long and about eighteen inches thick. In 1947, the Grace liner *Santa Clara* ran over a brown eel-like creature estimated at 60 feet long.

There is nothing outrageous about the idea of a large seagoing animal remaining unidentified. The megamouth shark (*Megachasma pelagios*) had never been reported until the first specimen was caught by accident in 1976. The Indopacific beaked whale (*Indopacetus pacificus*) is known from two skulls. There are no confirmed sightings of the whole animal, alive or dead.

We are left with this simple fact: on December 7th, 1905, two well-qualified witnesses observed a large unknown marine animal. Their report stands as evidence the oceans hold at least one spectacular creature still evading the probes of science.

SOURCES: Gould, Rupert T. 1930. *The Case for the Sea Serpent.* London: Philip Allan // Heuvelmans, Bernard. 1968. *In the Wake of the Sea Serpents.* New York: Hill and Wang // Meade-Waldo, E.G.B., and Nicoll, Michael J., 1906. "Description of an Unknown Animal Seen at Sea off the Coast of Brazil," *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London*, pp. 719-21. Quoted in Nicoll, Michael J. 1908. *Three Voyages of a Naturalist.* London: Witherby & Co.

NEWS AND COMMENT

An isolated cave in Romania, discovered in 1986, has yielded many astonishing new organisms. The cave developed an environment unlike any other place on Earth, where the air is only 7 - 10% oxygen and chemosynthetic bacteria form the basis for the ecosystem. At least 24 new and unique arthropods adapted to these conditions have been collected so far, including a blind water scorpion that breathes through its tail. (Gain, Bruce. "Cave Dwellers," *Popular Science*, January 1993, p.22.)

Even more astonishing are the finds which continue to come from the Vu Quang Nature Reserve and the surrounding regions of Vietnam and neighboring Laos. In addition to the already famous Vu Quang ox (Pseudoryx *nghetinhensis*), we now have a "giant" muntjac deer, half again as large as any known muntjac and now assigned a genus of its own as *Megamuntiacus vuquangensis*. Still to be classified are two more ungulates, the slow-running deer and the black deer. A more complete roundup will be featured in the next issue. (Linden, Eugene. "Prehistoric Creatures in a Lost World, *TIME*, June 20th, 1994, pp. 56-8. // Shuker, Karl. Telephone interview, July 13, 1994.) Also, Vietnamese scientists have captured the first live Vu Quang ox, formerly known as the Vu Quang oryx. (It's related to the ox, but it looks nothing like one, and a lot like an oryx.) The specimen is a female calf, five months old. ("No Bull," *USA Today*, June 24, 1994, p. 1D.) **Comment:** It's too bad Dr. Seuss is no longer around to have some fun with this ox-oryx confusion: "An ox and an oryx/they both start with O/but which one am I/that's what I'd like to know."

Dr. Roy Mackal, of the International Society of Cryptozoology, recently accompanied a Japanese expedition to Papua New Guinea's Lake Dakataua, where large aquatic animals had been reported. He believes an important discovery has been made. Videotape was taken of an animal at least 30 feet long. The range was too great for identification, but the creature was undulating vertically, so it was not a crocodile. Whatever the creature is, there is something extraordinary going on because this particular lake should not be housing *any* large animal.

Shaped by a still-active volcano, Lake Dakataua has no fish life and thus no ecosystem to support such a creature, unless it was a visitor that crossed the narrow strip of land separating the lake from the ocean. Dr. Mackal, while expressing due caution, speculates that the animal may be a surviving zegulodon (see "Naturalists' Monster," above), which might retain some land-crossing capability lost to modern whales. The creature is known locally as the *migaua* (pronounced "meego"). The Japanese network that owns the tape is still negotiating with American and British companies over broadcasting rights. Mackal cautions that one can never rule out a hoax, but it would have to be an elaborate one in this case. (Telephone interview, July 13, 1994).

Is there a type of ground sloth still living in Brazil? According to an article in the prestigious *Scientific American*, there may be. A Brazilian scientist, David Oren, believes the creature known as *mapinguari* to indigenous people may well be real. Descriptions of the red-haired, human-sized beast are consistent with each other and with fossils of the ground sloths, which existed as little as 8,500 years ago. The apparent range covers much of the western Amazon basin. (Holloway, Marguerite. "Living Legend," *Scientific American*, December 1993, p.40.)

RESOURCES:

BOOKS.

Moffett, Mark W. 1993. The High Frontier. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press. Explores Earth's least-known land environment - the tropical rainforest canopy. This book documents the danger and exhilaration of this work and explains the rainforest canopy environment. Moffett also describes Terry Erwin's studies of canopy arthropods and his predictions of the total number of species yet to be found. Thorough bibliography and photographs.

Alderton, David. 1993. Wild Cats of the World. New York: Facts on File. As one would expect from this publisher, this book is a thorough compendium of cat lore and cat taxonomy. All known species are here, along with a good discussion of the peculiar hybrid called the Kellas cat. Of even more interest to cryptozoologists, Alderton gives a detailed account of the onza, which he boldly lists as a species in its own right, going out on a limb that discoverers Troy Best and Richard Greenwell have not ventured onto. Not all of the species are illustrated, and the king cheetah is not discussed, but this remains a most valuable book.

PERIODICALS.

Anonymous. 1993. "Bizarre Bovid Identified in Vietnam," *Science News Letter*, June 19, p.397.
Baker, Sherry. 1994. "Odd Ox," *OMNI*, January, p.81.
Two more items on the Vu Quang ox.

Stork, Nigel E., and Christopher H. C. Lyal. "Extinction or 'co-extinction' rates?" *Nature*, November 25, 1993, p.307. Discusses the problem of determining extinction of small creatures dependent on larger ones that vanish. For instance, when the passenger pigeon vanished, two species of host-specific lice went with it. The relevance for cryptozoology is that, when we discover or rediscover a species, we have probably found others along with it.

READER RESPONSES:

"I greatly enjoyed the first two issues... a most valuable addition to the cryptozoological literature, and I do indeed wish to continue receiving it."

- Dr. Karl P. N. Shuker, British zoologist and writer

(The editor appreciates the praise and will try to live up to it.)

IN CLOSING:

Readers will note some changes. The newsletter is longer (6-8 pages) and goes to a bimonthly schedule. This allows for longer articles and gives the editor time to have a life.

Reminder: All researchers who are not already members should join the International Society of Cryptozoology. The ISC produces the quarterly *ISC Newsletter* and the annual scientific journal *Cryptozoology*, plus holding an annual membership conference. The ISC takes no position on the existence of any particular animal, but strives to bring scientific rigor and respect to the search for unclassified or presumed-extinct forms. Membership is $32 a year, including all publications and the conference. Contact J. Richard Greenwell, Secretary, ISC, P.O. Box 43070, Tucson, AZ 85733. NOTE: *Cryptozoology Newsletter* is not an official ISC publication and is by no means a substitute for the resources the ISC provides. This newsletter is meant to provide an additional, more frequently published source of news, plus a "running bibliography" of related publications.

I welcome comments, corrections, or clippings. Respond to the editor at 802 Williamsburg Dr., Kokomo, IN 46902, USA.
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